

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:22

ANSWERED ON:22.07.2015

Free Roaming Service

Pradhan Shri Nagendra Kumar;Yadav Shri Dharmendra

**Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has launched free roaming service for the customers across the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the revenue loss likely to be suffered by BSNL as a result thereof;
- (c) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has been consulted before launching free roaming service by BSNL and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the TRAI thereto;
- (d) whether the Government has directed other telecom service providers/operators to follow suit; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of other operators thereon, operator-wise and the time by which all operators including MTNL are likely to provide free national roaming in the country?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.22 FOR 22nd July, 2015 REGARDING "FREE ROAMING SERVICE".

(a)&(b) Yes Madam. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has offered its postpaid and prepaid customers free incoming voice call facility while in national roaming initially for a period of one year w.e.f. 15.06.2015 under its free national roaming tariff plan.

BSNL has informed that it is a customer oriented measure and is expected to attract customers to avail of BSNL services thereby increasing its customer base. BSNL expects that the reduction in revenue on account of free incoming call while roaming will be compensated by the increase in revenue through new customers. Therefore, no revenue loss is envisaged due to free national roaming under mobile services. However, the actual impact may be known after a few months.

(c) Under Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) regulation, all telecom service providers including BSNL are allowed to fix roaming tariff for various components within the ceiling prescribed by TRAI and there is no bar for any operator giving incoming call as free in the tariff plan while roaming.

National Telecom Policy, 2012 has indicated the ultimate objective of working towards removing national roaming charges across the nation.

BSNL has reported that TRAI has not been consulted before launching of free roaming service. However, the tariff was duly reported to TRAI by as per reporting requirement of TRAI.

(d)&(e)The issue of tariff fixation falls within the domain of TRAI by virtue of the provisions of sub-section (2) of Section 11 of the TRAI Act, 1997. TRAI has reported that it has prescribed ceiling tariff for national roaming service vide Telecommunication Tariff (60th Amendment) Order dated 9.4.2015. This order mandates every Telecom Service Provider (TSP) to have a Special Roaming Tariff Plan in which incoming voice calls, while on national roaming, shall be free, on payment of fixed charges, if any. In view of this, all the mobile operators including MTNL have at least one tariff plan where incoming calls are free while national roaming where the subscriber is expected to pay fixed charges for availing this facility.

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